

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 1680

EXDIS

E.O. 11682: GDS

TAGS: UN, AORG, ECE

SUBJECT: ECE - POSSIBLE RELOCATION OF SECRETARIAT

REF: USUN 769

1. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY STANOVNIK RAISED THIS MATTER IN INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH MISSION OFFICER FOLLOWING DEBATE IN FIFTH COMMITTEE. HE EXPRESSED GRAVE CONCERN OVER THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH A MOVE AS WELL AS VERY SERIOUS DISRUPTION TO THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF THE SECRETARIAT AT LEAST FOR AN INTERIM PERIOD.

2. STANOVNIK STRESSED THAT GENEVA HAS BEEN TRADITIONAL SITE OF ECE AND HAS PROVIDED FOCAL POINT FOR ACTIVITIES IN THE HEART OF WESTERN EUROPE. HE ADDED THAT EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES STRONGLY FAVOR VIENNA BECAUSE OF PROXIMITY AND THAT THEY MIGHT SEEK TO EXERT AN EASTERN ORIENTATION OF THE COMMISSION FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT.

3. STANOVNIK SAID THAT HE ESTIMATED THAT DISRUPTION OF TH SECRETARIAT WOULD BE SUBSTANTIAL. HE HAS ENDEAVORED TO RECRUIT THE BEST POSSIBLE STAFF WHILE MAINTAINING A DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. HE BELIEVES HE WOULD LOSE IMPORTANT WESTERN STAFF MEMBERS WHO WOULD NOT BE IN A POSITION

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TO MOVE AND THAT HE WOULD BE FACED WITH SERIOUS PROBLEM OF

RECONSTITUTING WESTERN STAFF. HE ALSO ATTACHES THE LIBRARY AND REFERENCE FACILITIES AVAILABLE AT THE PALAIS WHICH ARE UNPARALLELED IN EUROPE AND WHICH COULD NOT BE DUPLICATED IN VIENNA.

4. FINALLY, STANOVNIK FEELS THAT ECE DERIVES PARTICULAR BENEFIT FROM CLOSE PROXIMITY TO UNCTAD, GATT AND ILO ACTIVITIES WHICH RELATE TO ITS WORK. OPPORTUNITY FOR EASY CONSULTATION AND SHARED REFERENCE FACILITIES WOULD BE LOST.

COMMENT: MISSION WOULD SERIOUSLY QUESTION ADVISABILITY OF MOVE IF PRINCIPAL BASIS IS TO ACCOMMODATE OVER-AMBITIOUS BUILDING PROGRAM BY GOA. ALTHOUGH STANOVNIK VIEWS MAY BE SOMEWHAT OVERSTATED, WE ARE PERSUADED THAT THEY ARE VALID AND SHOULD CARRY CONSIDERABLE WEIGHT IN DEVELOPING U.S. POSITION. POINT IN PARA. 4 ABOVE PARTICULARLY COMPELLING IN OUR VIEW, AND ALSO CARRIES OVER TO U.S. REPRESENTATION IN ECE.

WE FEEL THAT ANY DECISION TO MOVE SHOULD BE BASED ON ASSESSMENT OF MOST RATIONAL USE OF FACILITIES IN GENEVA AND NOT IN VIENNA AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE SUBSTANTIAL COSTS WHICH WOULD BE INCURRED AS WELL AS SERIOUS DISRUPTION TO THE SECRETARIAT STAFF.

WE WOULD ALSO QUESTION ADMINISTRATIVE WISDOM OF MOVEMENT OF SOME UNITS INTO GENEVA (HUMAN RIGHTS, UNICEF) WHILE OTHERS BEING MOVED OUT. PRESSURE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY MOUNT TO MAKE FURTHER MOVES OUT OF NEW YORK TO FILL VACUUM IN GENEVA. THIS COULD LEAD TO CONSTANT MOVEMENT, DISRUPTION AND FINANCIAL BURDEN.

WE SHOULD ALSO BE SENSITIVE TO POSITION OF GOVERNMENT OF SWITZERLAND WHICH WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO SEE VIENNA DEVELOPED AS MAJOR UN CENTER AT ITS EXPENSE.

WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT DAVIDSON BE INFORMED THAT U.S. CAN SEE NO REASON FOR MOVING ECE TO VIENNA AND THAT NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE SUBSTANTIAL. AT A MINIMUM WE WOULD REQUIRE OVERWHELMING ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS MOVE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE UN SHOULD BE PLACED IN CONFIDENTIAL

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POSITION OF MEETING NEEDS OF GOA OCCASIONED BY ITS INDEPENDENT DECISION TO PROCEED WITH BUILDING PROGRAM. IF NEW UN BODIES ARE CREATED, VIENNA COULD BE CONSIDERED AS POSSIBLE SITE BUT SHOULD NOT ABSORB WELL-ESTABLISHED UNITS OPERATING ELSEWHERE.

WHEN U.S. POSITION IS DECIDED, REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO DISCUSS WITH STANOVNIK AND MEMBERS OF WESTERN CAUCUS.

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